

Christ Episcopal Church
Northwest corner of Main
and Taylor Streets
Jefferson
Marion County
Texas

HABS No. TEX-143

HABS
TEX
108-378
16-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. TEX-143

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Location: Northwest corner of Main and Taylor Streets,
Jefferson, Marion County, Texas

Present Owner: Vestry of Christ Episcopal Church

Present Use: Church

Statement of
Significance: This building is typical of many small, but dignified,
churches built throughout the west and southwest by
Episcopalians.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Land for the church was obtained on October 22, 1863 from Daniel N. Alley (Marion County Deed Book C, p. 84). The Christ Episcopal Church has been the sole owner since.
2. Date of erection: Construction was begun in 1868 (Parish Register Christ Church).
3. Architect: According to Jefferson legend, E. G. Benners, Layreader, directed the building of the church which was patterned after one that he had attended in Virginia.
4. Alterations and additions: Originally the building was of wooden frame construction. After damage from a severe storm in 1898, brick veneer was added to reinforce the walls. An early photograph indicates that the church originally had a steeple. Apparently this was also removed after the storm. The narthex has been completely reconstructed in recent years. It appears that there was originally a balcony at the back of the nave. A recent one-story brick addition with gabled and shed roof extends across the west end and forms an ell at the southwest corner. The present altar was installed in 1921.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Old views:

A History of Jefferson 1836-1936, p. 67 (see full
bibliographic entry below).

2. Bibliography:

Brown, Lawrence L. The Episcopal Church in Texas
1838-1874.

McKay, Mrs. Arch, and Spellings, Mrs. H. A. A History of
Jefferson, 1836-1936 (no publisher or date). A copy
is in the Jefferson Historical Society Museum.

Parish Register Christ Episcopal Church, 1860-1959.

PART 11. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is a small Gothic Revival building, typical of many churches built by Episcopalians in the southwest.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The building is 31'-1 1/2" x 60"-0" excluding the narthex which projects 8'-0" and is approximately 12' wide. Brick buttresses divide the long walls into four bays of approximately 15'.
2. Foundations: Brick.
3. Wall construction and finish: Frame with brick veneer.
4. Chimneys: Two sheet metal chimneys of recent date.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance has double copper doors in a pointed-arch opening with stone surround and glass transom.
 - b. Windows: There is one pointed-arch window with modern steel sash and translucent glass in each of the four side bays. The southwest window has been closed to accommodate the later addition. There is a roundel with stuccoed surround above the main door. At the altar end are three stained glass lancet windows in a round-arch opening.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice: Simple fascia with no moldings. Sheet metal gutters and conductors of recent date.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The simple floor plan of this church is typical of small churches dating from this period. It consists of a nave, a small sacristy on either side of the altar and a choir area at the front of the nave. It has a double aisle.
2. Flooring: Six-inch-wide, vertical-grain pine flooring.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls are finished with plaster and have a 33-inch dark wood wainscot comprised of 11-inch flush boards capped by a half-round molding.

Ceilings are finished with narrow tongue-and-groove boards.

The nave ceiling is relieved by decorative hammer-beam trusses with dark finish which coincide with exterior brick piers.

4. Doors and doorways: Four-panel doors in pointed-arch openings. There is a wood-panel transom over each door.
5. Trim: Dark wooden trim around door and window openings is plain.
6. Hardware: Iron butts and iron latch hardware with porcelain knobs.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Lighting: Modern electrical fixtures.
 - b. Heating: Gas, forced-air.

D. Site and Surroundings:

The church occupies a 150 foot square lot. The main doors face east.

Prepared by Willard B. Robinson, AIA
Supervisory Architect, HABS
National Park Service
July 1966

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made in 1966 during a summer project financed by the National Park Service to record 16 structures in Jefferson and the near-by area. The summer recording team received the cooperation of numerous citizens and organizations who provided office space, lodgings, board, and research assistance. Among the cooperators were the Dan Lester Drilling Company, the Excelsior Hotel, Mrs. A. K. Payne, the Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club, and the Marion County Chamber of Commerce.

The project was under the direction of A. Lewis Koue of the Historic American Buildings Survey's Western Office in San Francisco. Supervisor of the recording team was Willard B. Robinson, AIA, of Texas Technological College. The team was composed of student architects David L. Bouse of the University of Nebraska, Bob J. Fong of the University of Idaho, Donald Quackenbush of Washington State University, and Robert M. Swanson of the University of Texas. Photographs were made by National Park Service Photographer, Jack E. Boucher.